
Conversations Change Lives

Advance Care Planning: *It All Begins With a Conversation*

LaPOST Coalition
An Initiative of the
Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum

www.la-post.org ▪ 225-334-9299



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Our Objectives

- Introduce a difficult subject
- Discuss decisions that can be made or need to be made
- Review documents that should be completed
- Next steps



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Having the Conversation

- Think about what matters most at end of your life based on goals of care, personal values and religious beliefs
- Timing is essential
 - Before events occur
 - Any changes in health care
 - Important events in other people's lives that spur conversation



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Why Are We Having This Conversation?

California Health Care Foundation Study -- 2012

- 60% said making sure family is not burdened by tough decisions is extremely important
- 56% have not communicated end of life wishes
- 80% said if seriously ill, they would want to talk to doctor about end of life care
- 93% report never having end of life conversation with doctor



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Why Are We Having This Conversation?

California Health Care Foundation Study -- 2012

- 82% said it's important to put their wishes in writing
- 23% have actually done it
- 70% said they would prefer to die at home
- 70% die in a hospital, nursing home or long term care facility



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Where do you fall between these issues ...

- Do you want to know basics **or** as much as you can?
- Do you want an idea of how long you have left **or** would you rather not know?
- Do you want a say in every decision related to your care **or** do you want doctors to “do what they think is best”?



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When considering how long to receive medical care ...

- Do you want to live as long as possible no matter what **or** is quality of life more important than quantity?



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How involved do you want family members or loved ones to be....

- Do you want them to follow your wishes even if they're uncomfortable with wishes **or** do you want them to do what brings them peace, even if it's against what you want?
- Do you want to be alone, surrounded by loved ones **or** something in between?
- Do you want everyone to know everything about your health **or** only the basics shared?



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Do you think your family and loved ones know exactly what you would want?

- Are you worried that you'll receive too much or too little care near end of your life?
- What does being comfortable mean to you?



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Health Care Decision Making

- Understand current and future medical illnesses
- Become educated about types of treatments that are acceptable in certain situations that are consistent with goals, values and religious or cultural beliefs
- Discuss medical decision making with health care team and family or trusted friends



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Advance Care Planning

- Ongoing process to develop plans for future medical care if you are no longer able to speak for yourself
- Identify who you would want to speak for you
- Describe kinds of decisions you want them to make on your behalf based on your values, beliefs and goals of care



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Making Sure Wishes, Values and Goals Are Known and Followed

- Advance Directive
- Health Care Power of Attorney
- LaPOST document



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Advance Directives

Living Will

- Legal document prepared usually in advance of illness that describes care that would or would not be acceptable to you if you are unable to speak for yourself
- Does not need to be prepared by lawyer or notarized
- Can be very specific or very vague
- Not always readily available
- Requires interpretation and physician order to be used
- May not apply to current medical condition



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Health Care Power of Attorney

- Outlines who makes decisions for you if you are unable or unwilling to make decisions for yourself
- Does not require lawyer to complete; does not need to be notarized, but helpful
- Goes into effect if you are unable to make decisions, not if your family does not like the decisions you are making



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Health Care Power of Attorney

If HCPOA has not been appointed, the following decision making order applies ...

- Legal guardian (if one has been appointed)
 - Spouse (unless judicially separated)
 - Majority of children
 - Parents
 - Majority of siblings
 - Antecedents/descendants



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- Physician's order that outlines wishes for medical treatment and goals of care when you have a known serious advanced illness; also translates living will into a physician's order when you have life limiting and irreversible condition.
- More than an advance directive or health care power of attorney; recommended for patients with life limiting and irreversible conditions.
- Lists some of the medical treatments you can choose to have or not have. When completed, it must be honored by all health care professionals.



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- Can be completed by personal health care representative if you are no longer able to speak for yourself.
- To become valid, document must be discussed by you and/or your health care representatives and be appropriately completed. It must be signed by a physician.
- Of the three documents, the LaPOST document is most likely to ensure that you receive the care you want at end of life because it is a medical order and travels with you across health care settings.



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Bringing Up The Subject

I need your help with something important ...

- I'm okay now, but I'm worried that my situation may change, and I'd like to be prepared.
- I'd like your help as I plan for the future.
- I'd like to share my feelings with you about what I do and don't want as my illness gets worse.
- Have you ever thought about what you'd like at the end of life? I'd like to hear your thoughts.
- I don't want you to be confused about my wishes as I near the end of my life. Can we talk about what I want?



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Other Things To Think About ...

- Who do I want to talk to about my end of life wishes?
- Who do I trust to speak for me if I become unable to speak for myself?
- When would be a good time to talk?
- Where would I feel most comfortable having this conversation?
- What are the most important issues to cover?



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Other Things To Think About ...

- What is most important in the last phases of my life?
- Do I want to be actively involved in decisions about my care?
- Are there situations or circumstances that I consider to be worse than death?
- Where do I want or not want to receive care at the end of life?
- What do I most want my loved ones to know about my wishes?



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Making the Journey ...

- Packing list
- Sharing my wishes



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